

WASHINGTON – Nine Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Bicameral High-Speed & Intercity Passenger Rail Caucus today released the following statement following a plan from Chairmen Mica and Shuster’s plan to privatize Amtrak’s northeast corridor.

Today Co-Chairs Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Reps. Louise Slaughter (NY-28), John Olver (MA-1), Corrine Brown (FL-3) David Price (NC-4) and Tim Walz (MN-1) along with Vice Co-Chairs Earl Blumenauer (OR-3) and Laura Richardson (CA-37) said,

“The Northeast Corridor is by far Amtrak’s most successful corridor, exceeding all others in passengers and profit. What it suffers from, however, is the tendency to be used as a political pawn.

“Today Chairmen Mica and Shuster presented a plan to sever the Northeast Corridor, Amtrak’s most-traveled route, from the rest of America’s passenger rail network. It would dismantle the nation’s rail infrastructure and purposely put into jeopardy America’s passenger rail network. It is clear the profits from the Northeast Corridor are the backbone of Amtrak, which carried 10.4 million passengers in 2010, and yet they insist on separating it.

“We’ve seen this proposal before, when the previous Administration presented a similar plan veiling an attempt to dismantle Amtrak under the guise of supposed better service, and again we understand this to be a purely ideological gesture. The authors of this proposal won’t be happy until Amtrak is a distant memory, until every ticket taker and conductor is out of work and the millions people who ride Amtrak every year are left without.

“We agree that private investment is needed in America’s rail system and support Amtrak’s plan to attract private investment. But what we don’t support is rolling out the red carpet to foreign companies and Wall Street asking them to take over the operations of America’s railroads.

“For too long, the Northeast Corridor has been used as a talking point for anti-government ideology. The Northeast Corridor is profitable and popular. For the sake of rail passengers and tax payers nationwide, it must remain a part of Amtrak.”

[In March](#), the founding co-chairs joined together at Union Station to announce the formation of a coalition that will serve as the leading advocates to advance high-speed and intercity rail programs across the country. Today, the Caucus is bipartisan, bicameral and has grown to include 12 Senators and 41 Representatives.